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# Perceptual Reality in News Reporting “the World Cup”:

## a Perspective from the Spiral of Silence

### REALITE PERCEPTIBLE DANS LE REPORTAGE DES NOUVELLES « LA COUPE DU MONDE » :

#### UNE PERSPECTIVE DE LA SPIRALE DE SILENCE

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**Abstract:** Perceptual difference tells us that people experience the same thing and perceive it differently. The spiral of silence theory proposes the powerful media influences people's decision whether to express their opinions by providing the dominant opinion. Language determines perception, and perception affects language use. So the dominant opinion expressed by the news reports must reflect the reporters' perception.

The thesis collected 323 news reports on the World Cup as data, and categorized them into seven types: on ended matches, teams, individuals, fans, refereeing, FIFA, and others. The author tried to find out how reporters' perception affected the report selection by mainly analyzed the reports on the winner and the loser, and concluded how the reporters' perception affected language use by analyzing the language in the reports from structural and semantic aspects separately.

The findings of the research proved that the reporters' perception affected the formation of the dominant opinion the spiral of silence by reports selection and language use. And the reality processed by reporters' perception and expressed in the form of news report has been different from the reality itself.

This study has some significance on both how to interpret newspaper English and how to apply language making use of perception to strengthen effect of mass media.

**Key Words:** Perception, The spiral of silence, The dominant opinion

**Résumé:** La différence perceptible nous dit que les gens qui ont les même expériences perçoivent les choses de façon différente. La théorie de la Spirale de Silence démontre que les mass media puissants exercent une influence importante sur la décision des gens : s'ils doivent exprimer leurs opinions en offrant l'opinion dominante. La langue détermine la perception, et la perception affecte l'usage de la langue. Donc, l'idée dominante exprimée par les reportages des nouvelles reflètent nécessairement la perceptions des reporters.

Cette thèse a recueilli 323 reportages des nouvelles sur la Coupe du monde comme document, et les a classées en sept catégories : matchs finis, groupes, individus, fanatiques, arbitres, FIFA etc. L'auteur s'efforce de dégager comment la perception des reporters affecte la sélection des reportages à travers l'analyse des reportages sur le gagnant et le perdant, pour enfin conclure comment la perception des reporters affecte l'usage de la langue en faisant l'analyse sur la langue dans les reportages du point de vue structural et sémantique.

Les résultats de recherche prouvent que la perception des reporters affecte la formation des opinions dominantes—la Spirale de Silence par la sélection des reportages et l'usage de la langue.

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Et la réalité transformée par la perception des reporters et exprimée sous forme de reportage des nouvelles est différente que la réalité elle-même.

Ce texte est significatif non seulement pour l'interprétation des journaux anglais mais aussi pour la pratique de la langue, tout en utilisant la perception pour renforcer l'influence des mass media.

**Mots-clés:** perception, la Spirale de Silence, l'opinion dominante

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Perceptual difference tells us that people experience the same thing and perceive it differently. Perception can affect language use. So people who have different perception on the world use language differently.

The spiral of silence theory proposes that when one kind of opinion gets publicized by mass media continually and becomes the "dominant opinion", those who hold the opposite opinion will keep silent gradually. The amount of people not openly expressing deviant opinion and/or changing from deviant opinion will be increased. The spiral shows that people would change their opinion on the basis of perception on dominant opinion provided by the mass media. The dominant opinion is represented by news reports in the newspaper written by the reporters. So reporters' perception can influence the dominant opinion. In another word, reporters' perception can be reflected by news reports.

This paper tries to find out how reporters' perception affects the formation of the dominant opinion in the spiral of silence. The study also tries to conclude the reporters' perceptions reflected by selection of reports and the factors influencing their perception reflected by language, discuss how language affects the spiral of silence, and deduce how perception affects the spiral of silence. It is anticipated that language helps to form the dominant opinion. Furthermore, it is also believed that the perception reflected by language affects the spiral of silence by helping to form the dominant opinion. Lastly, it is suggested that the language use which draws upon perception in media will strengthen the effect of mass communication.

### Research Questions

1st. What's the reporters' perception reflected by selection of reports?

2nd. What are the factors influencing reporters' perception?

3rd. How does the language of reports affect the spiral of silence?

4th. How does the reporters' perception affect the spiral of silence?

This study has some significance on both how to interpret newspaper English and how to apply language making use of perception to strengthen effect of mass media. Additionally, reading English newspaper is an effective method to widen vocabulary and improve

reading level of English learners. So the study also has some constructive significance on Newspaper English learning and then on English learning.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Research on Perception Defining Perceptions

Perception takes place at every stage of effective communication. Communication researchers have done much in this field. People of a century ago saw perception as largely a physical or mechanical process. They thought the human eye and the other sense organs to work much like a camera or a tape recorder. This view of perception held that "there was a quite direct correspondence between an 'external reality' and a person's perception, or what was in the mind (Werner J. Severin & James W. Tankard, Jr, 1997)". So everybody perceives the world in essentially the same way. But later psychologists have found perception to be a more elaborate process. Berelson and Steiner (1964) stated that perception is the "complex process by which people select, organize, and interpret sensory stimulation into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world". Generally speaking, the term perception is a person's interpretation of reality.

Perception is mostly defined as a process. "Perception is a social, cognitive process whereby individuals assign meaning to raw sense-data. (Sarah Trenholm, 1995)" "Perception is the process of gathering sensory information and assigning meaning to it (Rudolph F. Verderber, 1996)". "Perception has been defined as the process by which we interpret sensory data (Lahlry, 1991)". "Perception is the process by which you become aware of objects, events, and especially, people through your senses: sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing (Joseph A. Devito, 1998)." Perception is an active process. "Our minds are constantly working to fill in missing information or link events and experiences together in ways that make sense to us (Sarah Trenholm & Arthur Jensen, 2000)." Bennett, Hoffman, and Prakash (1989) stated that "perception is notably active: It involves learning, updating perspective, and interacting with the observed".

### Perceptual Process

Perceptual process is viewed as occurring in three

stages: selection, organization, and interpretation (Sarah Trenholm, 1995; Rudolph F. Verderber, 1996). And Joseph A. Devito (1998) designed three triangles to illustrate that the stages of perception overlap one another (see Figure 3). Also, the process goes from

sensory stimulation to interpretation and evaluation, the focus narrows. People organize part of what they sensed and they interpret and evaluate part of what they organized.

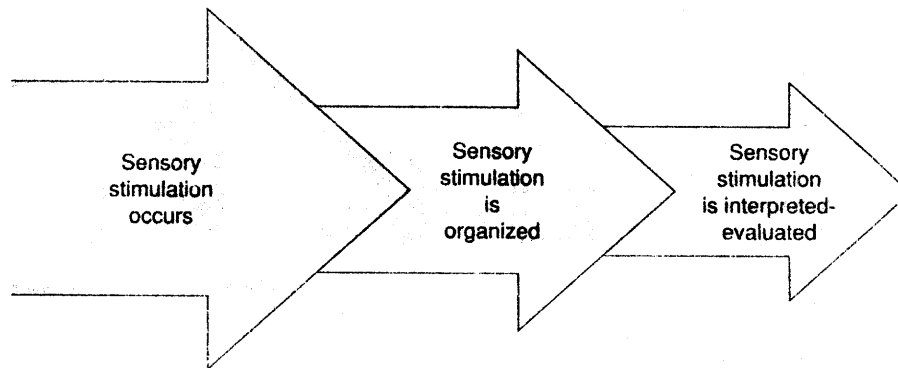


Figure 1 the Three Stages of the Perception Process

**SELECTION** Selection is the first step in the perceptual process.

Rudolph F. Verderber (1996) stated that "of course, selection is determined in part by the physiological limitations of our senses." But "more significant for our purposes, what we perceive is limited even further by three psychological factors: interest, need, and expectation." So "the combined effect of sensory capability, interest, need, and expectation is to sharply limit our perceptions to a relatively small selection of stimuli that actually impinge on our senses." Joseph A. Devito (1998) divided selective perception into selective attention and selective exposure. "In selective attention, you attend to those things that you anticipate will fulfill your needs or will prove enjoyable. In selective exposure, you expose yourself to people or messages that will confirm your existing beliefs, that will contribute to your objectives or that will prove satisfying in some way." It implies that you perceive only a very small portion of what you could perceive. There are limits on the quantity of stimulation you can take in at any given time.

**ORGANIZATION** Once the brain selects that information, it then organizes its selections. Rudolph F. Verderber (1996) suggests that the meaning people get from a perception depends not only on what is selected but on how it is organized. Gestalt psychologists suggest that organizing principles which the brain follows in making sense out of random external elements includes simplicity (perceiving complex stimuli in simple forms), pattern (perceiving even random stimuli along common lines), proximity (perceiving stimuli that are close together as related), and good form (perceiving complete forms even when parts are missing).

**INTERPRETATION** Interpretation is the process of giving meaning to information that has been selected and organized. Rudolph F. Verderber (1996) pointed out that "how we interpret information depends on many

factors, including degree of ambiguity, emotional state, preconceived notions, and culture".

Joseph A. Devito (1998) named this stage "interpretation-evaluation" (hyphenated because the two processes cannot be separated). Joseph (1998) suggested that the stage is inevitably subjective. He discussed that "your interpretation-evaluations are greatly influenced by your experiences, needs, wants, values, beliefs about the way things are or should be, expectations, physical and emotional state, and so on".

Larry A. Samovar, Richard E. Porter, & Lisa A. Stefani (2000) discussed that "although the physical process of perception is the same in everyone, culture influences the final step of interpretation and evaluation".

Obviously, there is much room at this stage for disagreement (Joseph, 1998). Although we may all be exposed to the same external stimulus, the way we interpret-evaluate (and organize) it will differ from person to person and from one time to another for the same person.

The three stages of perception are reviewed one by one, but the three stages of perception happened almost simultaneously (Rudolph F. Verderber, 1996). All the three stages of perceptual process can make perception subjective. Besides, perception is more subjective than most of us realize (Rudolph F. Verderber, 1996). Perception is influenced by external factors.

### Factors Influencing Perception

Werner J. Severin & James W. Tankard, Jr (1997) summarized two types of influences on our perception: structural and functional. "Sensory data come to us through our five senses. Research has identified two types of influences on our perception: structural and functional. Structural influence on perception comes from the physical aspects of the stimuli to which we are being exposed—for instance, the closer together a series

of dots, the more they are seen as forming a line. Functional influences are the psychological factors that influence perception, and therefore, introduce some subjectivity into the process.” A number of psychological factors which influenced perception included assumptions based on past experiences (that often operate at an almost unconscious level), cultural expectations, motivation (needs), moods, and attitudes. A number of experiments have demonstrated the effects of these factors on perception.

Guan Shijie (1996) summarized the three factors affecting perception: physical factors, environmental factors, and cultural factors.

People’s perception is influenced by wants, needs, attitudes, and other psychological factors. Werner J. Severin, James W. Tankard, Jr (2001) gave the term of “selective perception” for this tendency. Selective perception plays an important role in communication of any sort. Selective perception means that different people can react to the same message in very different way. No communicator can assume that a message will have the intended meaning for all receivers or even that it will have the same meaning for all receivers (Werner J. Severin, James W. Tankard, Jr., 2001). So people perceive “social reality” differently. Sapir (1929) proposed that “the real world” is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. It is necessary to make clear the relationship between language and perception when we study perception on reality.

### **Language and Perception**

During the last several decades, much attention has been focused on the relation between language and perception. For a long time, people perceive language as the tool of expressing their thoughts and concepts, that is, among people, language and objective reality, language does not affect people’s perception on objective reality at all. In 1929, Sapir challenged this traditional idea: the function of language is not only to communicate, but to shape our perception on objective reality in daily life. In another word, the structure of language can determine the way people with this language observe the world. Language determines perception. In fact, in 18—19 century German scholars had proposed this opinion. In 1930s, Whorf, a student of Sapir, discussed the above idea in his works: Culture and environment shape the form of language, and conversely, a person is shaped by the form of language and gradually forms the perception on objective reality. This is “Language determinism”: Due to the different languages, people with them have different experiences about surroundings. According to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, language “is not merely a reproducing instrument for voicing ideas but rather is itself the shaper of ideas...”.

Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has emphasized language functions. And especially, it is very important for the researchers of intercultural communication who have

realized the language’s importance to perception. Hoijer, Harry (1976) suggested, “Language plays a large and significant role in the totality of culture. Far from being simply a technique of communication, it is itself a way of direction the perceptions of its speakers and it provides for them habitual modes of analyzing experience into significant categories.”

Melvin L. De Fleur & Sandra Ball-Rokeach (1996) have also suggested that language people use shaped the way they perceive and developed beliefs about the realities around them. That is to say, they considered perception as one of the two processes which “are vital consequences of the specific language we speak (p136)”.

It is generally admitted that language determines perception. Sapir (1929) discussed that language powerfully conditions all of our thinking about social problems and processes. But to which degree language affects the process of thinking? Until the end of 1980s, did researches show that language doesn’t affect the process of thinking in strong form but in subtle form.

Cultural factors are one of the three factors affecting perception summarized by Guan Shijie (1996). Language is the carrier of culture. Just as he pointed out in 1995, “Our most perceptions—the abstract concepts which are used to understand and construct our specific experiences—are acquired, stored and recalled through language.”

On the other hand, perception affects the language use. Rudolph F. Verderber (1996) suggested that accurate perceptions come into play at every stage of effective communication. “Your perceptions of information affect your message; your perceptions of the environment affect how you send your message; your perceptions of your listeners affect how you shape your message; and your perceptions of how your listeners react to you affect the outcome of your message.”

People with different views on the world have different perceptions on the world, and naturally languages they use are different. When a person applies the form of language to express his perception on objective reality, language reflects his perception. Then, newspaper, one of the media, communicated through language, is bound to reflect to some extent the perception on communicators. Thus, we can study perception by analyzing the language in newspaper.

## **2.2 Research on the Spiral of Silence**

Numerous studies have been conducted on the spiral of silence since Noelle-Neumann (1974) formulated the theory a quarter of a century ago. The concept of the “spiral of silence” derives from a larger body of theory of public opinion that was developed and tested by Noelle-Neumann over a number of years (Noelle-Neumann, 1974, 1984, 1991). The theory proposes that, in order to avoid isolation on important

public issues, many people are guided by what they think to be the dominant or declining opinions in their environment. People tend to conceal their views if they feel they are in a minority and are more willing to express them if they think they are dominant. The result is that those views that are perceived to be dominant gain even more ground and alternatives retreat still further. This is the spiraling effect referred to. The spiral of silence can be defined as a process in which new opinion can be developed or the connotation of former opinion can be spread. (Noelle-Neumann, 1993)

The theory was first formulated and tested to explain puzzling findings in German politics where opinion poll findings were inconsistent with other data concerning expectations of who would win an election and signally failed to predict the result. The explanation offered was that the media were offering a misleading view of the opinion consensus. They were said to be learning in a leftist direction, against the underlying opinion of the (silent) majority. (Denis McQuail, 2000)

Stephen W. Littlejohn (1992) summarized the theory, "The spiral of silence occurs when individuals who perceive that their opinion is popular express it, whereas those who do not think their opinion is popular remain quiet. This process occurs in a spiral, so that one side of an issue ends up with much publicity and the other side

with little. In everyday life we express our opinion in a variety of ways: we talk about them, we wear buttons, and we put stickers on our car bumpers. According to this theory, people are more apt to do these kinds of things when they perceive that others share their opinion and less apt to do when they do not."

This theory rests on two assumptions which Noelle-Neumann presents much research evidence to support. "The first is that people know which opinions are prevalent and which are not. This is called the quasi-statistical sense because people have a sense of the percentages of the population for and against certain positions. People do not seem reluctant to make educated guesses about public opinion. The second assumption is that people adjust their expressions of opinion to these perceptions." (Stephen W. Littlejohn, 1992)

Salwen, Lin, and Matera (1994) studied the willingness of citizens in three communities to express their opinion on the issue of "official English". They found that a general tendency for willingness to speak out is related to perception on national opinion and perception of national media coverage more than perception on local opinion or local media coverage on the issue. These results provide mixed support for the spiral of silence theory.

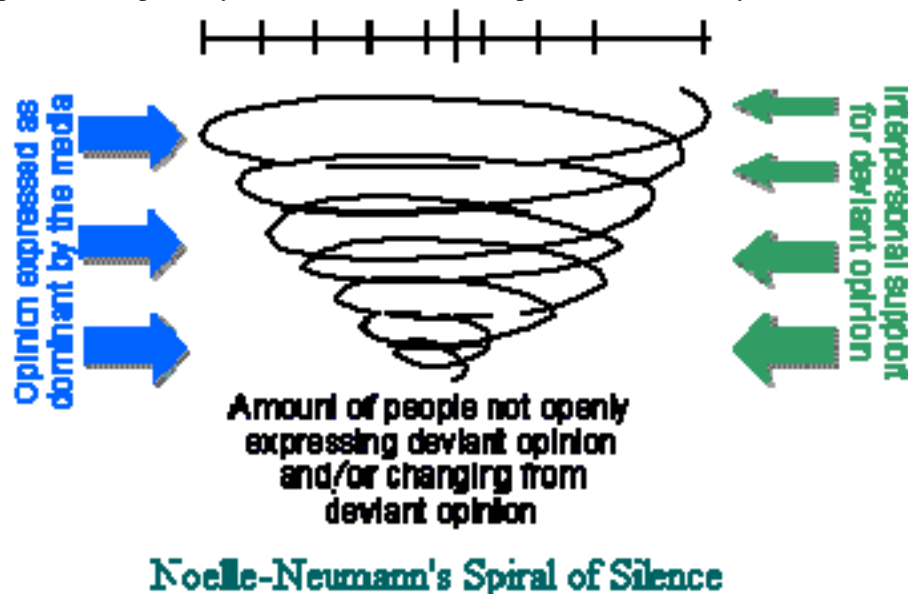


Figure 2 the Spiral of Silence

### The Mass Media and the Dominant Opinion

The spiral of silence theory posits truly powerful mass media (Noelle-Neumann, 1973). Werner J. Severin & James W. Tankard, Jr summarized that "Noelle-Neumann suggests that the mass media plays an important role when people are attempting to determine what the majority opinion is".

The spiral of silence theory explains the long-term effect of the mass media on public opinion and human action and interaction. Noelle-Neumann (1983) described the power of the media in this way,

"Journalistic preference for findings of 'minimal media effects' has distorted the interpretation of research findings over the years, but today the 'dogma of media powerlessness' is no longer tenable ". The theory explains how the mass media works in conjunction with majority opinion to silence minority beliefs on political issues and engender conformity (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). It also explains how a majority view is formed. Noelle-Neumann (1991) reported on her decade-long study of the nuclear energy plant issue in Germany. She used that research to show how a minority opinion opposing nuclear energy power plants gradually became

a majority view with the consistent and persistent help of the powerful mass media. In fact, she stated that "I have never found a spiral of silence that goes against the tenor of the media, for the willingness to speak out depends in part upon sensing that there is support and legitimization from the media". So John F. Cragan & Donald C. Shields (1998) summarized that "a minority viewpoint can never become a majority viewpoint without the persistent help of the media, which are either naturally sympathetic or authoritatively powerful".

Mass media is one of the spiral of silence theory's basic concepts. With more and more mass media support of the majority public opinion, we desire conformity and join in the expression of the majority view. It is just as John F. Cragan & Donald C. Shields (1998) stated that "Of course, we know public opinion through what we hear, see, and read in the mass media and in talking with other people".

Chen Lidan (1998) also discussed that the opinions mentioned and emphasized by mass media is easily regarded as the dominant opinions or those which are waiting to develop, which people can express freely and aren't afraid of isolation. He admitted that on the level of perception the media has powerful influence on the opinion of public. He thought that the perception on majority's opinion was mainly the perception on the mass media's opinion. He attributed the appearance of the spiral of silence to the powerful mass media. "Mass media itself is authoritative. The content of media is public and remarkable so that communication exists everywhere. Furthermore, the repeated reports, the continual mass communication and the accumulated information make it come into being". The opinion on the mass media is the dominant opinion in the spiral of silence. But he also pointed out that the effect of the media leading public opinion should be analyzed in detail. "Although in most cases the controlling mechanism of the media to public opinion leads to unison in public expression, there exists the distance between that and the real trust of the public. Exaggeratedly chasing the effect made by the media may get the opposite reaction."

Denis McQuail (2000) summarized the effect of mass media. "The main point is that the mass media are the most readily accessible source for assessing the prevailing climate, and if a certain view predominates in the media it will tend to be magnified in the subsequent stages of personal opinion formation and expression." Furthermore, Noelle-Neumann (1984) suggested that "the media provides people with the words and phrases they can use to defend a certain point of view. If people find no current, frequently repeated expressions for their point of view, they lapse into silence; they become effectively mute."

Research has shown that the media provides and helps to form the dominant opinion which leads to the spiral of silence. But there is no research on the way in

which the media provides and helps to form dominant opinion.

### **2.3 Research on Perception in the Process of the Spiral of Silence**

Rudolph Verderber (1996) suggested that accurate perceptions come into play at every stage of effective communication. So do perceptions in effective mass communication. Gabel Weimann (2000) suggested that "the spiral of silence is concerned in some way with the role of the media in shaping people's interpretation of the world around them". The term perception can be defined as a person's interpretation of reality. So here, interpretation of the world means the perception on the world. That is to say, the spiral of silence is concerned in some way with the role of the media in shaping people's perception on the world around them.

The purpose of assumptions of the spiral of silence theory is to discover the media's control of public opinion by starting with the obvious "environment of public opinion" provided by mass media and the receivers' perception on it. It emphasizes the perception process of mass media information. The question of the attitude and behavior change is under consideration after that.

Chen Lidan (1998) suggested that, to the large extent, the spiral of silence appears when receivers perceive the mass media's opinion. The psychological press or need for a sense of security brought by the perception makes most of the public use the repeated words and opinion of media while they express publicly. He also summarized that "Glynn, Ostman, and McDonald commented that the spiral of silence is the most approaching real theory of all theories of receivers' perception on mass media content. The theory looks perception as a process which includes a series of dynamic explanation to a certain effect after some time".

Miller & Prentice (1994) suggested that the degree to which people perceive or mistakenly perceive the dominant opinion is related to people's perceptual ability formed by themselves, emotion, judgment, and behavior.

Glynn et al. (1997) concluded from a recent meta-analysis of survey studies that there was little evidence that perception on support or not for one's own opinion is related to willingness to speak out. Even so, there is supportive evidence (Mutz and Soss, 1997; Gunther, 1998) for a simpler version of the theory that media coverage does shape individual perceptions of public sentiment on current issues (opinion about opinion).

From what we have reviewed, we can see communication researchers have paid much attention to perception on dominant opinion. And in fact, studies have been conducted on the formation of public opinion since Noelle-Neumann (1974) formulated the theory a

quarter of a century ago. But few studies have been found on how reporters' perception in the process of the spiral of silence.

Next, the famous Westley-Maclean's conceptual model (1957) for communications research will be reviewed. Perception in mass communication has been reflected by the model. It was considered as an overall model of mass communication by Werner J. Severin, James W. Tankard, Jr (2001). They even quoted the

model to bring the communication theories all together in "the Overall Picture", the last chapter of their works *Communication Theories: Origin, Methods, and Uses in the Mass Media*. From this we can see the position and the authoritativeness of the model in mass communication field. The model is used to illustrate how the changes take place to the information of a specific event in the communication channel.

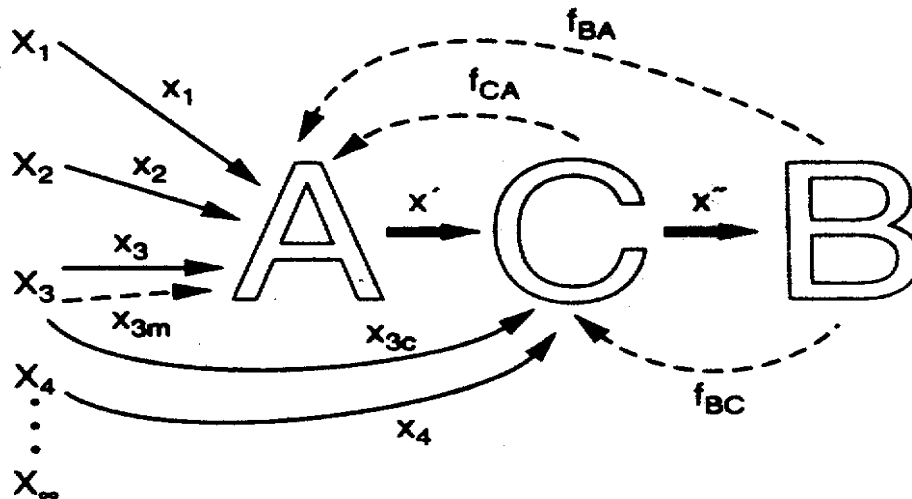


Figure 3 Westley-Maclean's conceptual model for communication research

This classic model in the mass communication field was offered to depict the flow of news from a source or the entire range of possible news events, through communicator, to the receiver or the audience of news.

In the model, As are advocacy roles ("the communicator") and can be a personality or a social system that selects and transmits message purposively. Bs are what is usually meant by the "destination" or the "public". These are individuals, groups, or social systems that need and use information about their environment to help satisfy needs and help solve problems. Cs (channel roles) serve as agents of Bs by selecting and transmitting nonpurposively the information Bs need, especially information that is not readily available to Bs. Xs are the objects and events "out there" in message form (abstractions of X in a form that can be transmitted).

*Channels* are the means by which Xs (message) are transmitted through As to Bs. Channels include C, who may alter message (acting as "gatekeepers"). *Encoding* is the process by which As and Cs abstract from Xs the messages (X1) transmitted in channels. *Decoding* takes place when Bs receive the message and interiorize it. *Feedback* provides As and Cs with information about the effect of their messages on Bs. (Werner J. Severin, James W. Tankard, Jr, 2001)

The scholars didn't mention the concept of perception. But perceptual process has been reflected in the model. For example, the messages C transmits to B ( $X''$ ) represent his selections from both messages to him from As ( $X'$ ) and C's selections and abstractions from

Xs in his own sensory field ( $X_{3c}$ ,  $X_4$ ), which may or may not be Xs in A's field. C's direct perception is reflected when it transmits his own selections and abstractions from Xs in his own sensory field. At first, C selects from the sensory data. Then C organizes and interprets the data in its own form. That is the perceptual process. And both A and C select to decide which should be sent into the channel leading to B. That is the selection stage of perceptual process. It will be discussed in detail in the part of discussion.

#### Further Investigation Needed

From the review of previous research, areas that warrant further investigation were identified.

Denis McQuail (2000) suggested that "the spiral of silence theory is much more than a theory of media effect and involves several dimensions that need to be investigated in conjunction". The fact that perception exists at every stage of effective mass communication makes the study feasible. The spiral of silence theory concerns the effect of mass media. The research showed that people didn't openly express their deviant opinion and/or changed from deviant opinion to dominant opinion on the basis of their perception on the dominant opinion provided by the mass media. The dominant opinion is expressed by reports in newspaper, one of the media. And language in the reports can reflect the perception of people who use it. So reporters' perception must play an important role in the spiral of silence. But few studies on the role of reporters' perception in the spiral of silence have been found.

To build on previous research, the researcher decided to expand the research on how reporters' perception affect the formation of dominant opinion in the process of the spiral of silence by language.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Data Collection**

The paper collected the reports of the World Cup in China Daily from May 31, 2002 to July 1, 2002 as data because: 1. Newspapers are easily collected and preserved among the mass media, on which the reports have effectiveness for a given period of time; 2. China Daily is the only national English newspaper of authority in China and its readers are of various backgrounds (different nationalities, cultures, beliefs and attitudes, etc.,) which makes it representative to study perception in intercultural communication; 3. During the period of the World Cup, China Daily has extra World Cup Special which publishes wonderful reports not only by China Daily but also by the top news agencies of the world, and the newspapers from May 31 to July 1 include the reports which range from the preparation for the opening ceremony to final Cup winner.

#### **3.2 Data processing**

##### **3.2.1 Reason and purpose**

According to what the Glasgow Media Group (1980) calls "viewers' maxims" it will be understood that first appearing items are most "important", and that generally, items receiving more time are also more important. 2. Denis McQuail (1987) summarizes the relative significance of events reported is related to the newspaper space. "It is common knowledge that news pages, newspapers and news bulletins are put together with a view to their overall appearance or possible effect and are not a random set of items, even after allowance has been made for the principle of order of importance". 3. Lahey (1989) suggests that people are more likely to perceive stimuli that are greater in intensity than surrounding stimuli and those that have novelty value.

##### **3.2.2 The detailed dimensions**

Firstly, the type of all the reports on the World Cup will be categorized. The basic types of reports are reports on ended matches, teams, individuals, fans, refereeing, FIFA, and others. Secondly, the amount of reports on the winner and on the loser will be summarized separately. And among the reports involving both the winner and the loser, the amount of the reports which are reported from winner to loser and from loser to winner will be summarized separately. And the percentages of these two kinds of reports will be calculated. Thirdly, the

nation of the football team reported in the picture(s) on the first page of everyday World Cup Special will be clarified. And the types of reports in the pictures will be categorized. The basic types of reports are: report on winner, report on loser, report on both, and report before the match.

##### **3.2.3 Data analysis procedure**

The paper observes the types of the reports, summarizes what are likely to be reported, and generalizes the likely perception on the winners. Then singles out some words and sentences in the reports as examples to discuss in detail what the reporters' perception is, how language affects the spiral of silence, and concludes how reporters' perception affect the spiral of silence.

##### **3.2.4 Method of analysis**

1st. What are the characters of report selection? The paper summarized the aspects selected and organized by China Daily of an international match such as World Cup which involves 32 top national teams, individuals, football fans and refereeing. And the ways in which media reflects perception were categorized.

2nd. Is it balanced between the reports on the winners and those on the losers? The paper compared the amount of the reports on the winner and the loser and summarized the way in which they are reported.

3rd. What are the characteristics of the language used to report the results of the matches? The paper inspected the language and the way in which the results of the matches are reported.

### **4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter includes two parts: findings and discussion.

#### **4.1 Findings**

Findings are reported by the data analysis questions in this section.

There are altogether 323 reports on the World Cup. From the above table, we can see the reports on ended matches, teams and individuals are the focus of reporting.

Among all the reports, 93 are on the winner and only 38 on the loser. In the reports of the same sorts the former takes 71%, while the later only 29%. In addition, there are nine days' reports only on the winner (no reports at all on the loser). There are 24 reports which involve both the winner and the loser in all. 23 of them are reported from the winner to the loser, and only 1 of them, from the loser to the winner. The newspapers



covered China team every day from the May 31, the first day of the World Cup, to June 17, three days after the

end of the first round except June 11. And there are 24 reports on Beckham, 14 on Ronaldo, and 7 on Zidane.

**Table 1 the types and amounts of the reports on the World Cup in China Daily (From May 31, to July 1, 2002)**

Types of reports	On ended matches	On teams	On individuals	On fans	On refereeing	On FIFA	Others	total
Amounts of reports	106	105	47	17	10	3	35	323
%	33%	33%	15%	5%	3%	1%	10%	100%

**Table 2: classification of the reports with a huge picture on the first page of World Cup Special**

Date	Topic	Nation	Type
31-May	Fight For Good Result, Holistic Learning	China	Before the match
June 1-2	Vive le Senegal!	France	Both
3-Jun	Reigning Spain	Spain	Winner
4-Jun	Brazil-iant!	Brail	Winner
5-Jun	Heady Hopes deflated	China	Loser
6-Jun	Luck of the Irish	Ireland	Winner
7-Jun	Down but not out	France	Loser
June 8-9	Rule Britannia!	England	Winner
10-Jun	Keeping hopes alive	Mexico	Winner
11-Jun	Singing in the rain	Portugal	Winner
12-Jun	French kiss goodbye	France	Loser
13-Jun	Cry for me, Argentina	Argentina	Loser
14-Jun	Seventh heaven	Italy	Winner
June 15-16	Incheon towards success	South Korean	Winner
17-Jun	Hair-raising victory	Senegal	Winner
18-Jun	Bring on England	Brazil	Winner
19-Jun	Dream goes Ahn and on	South Korean	Winner
20-Jun	Clash of the Titans	Brazil	Before the match
	England braced for Brazilian assault	England	
21-Jun	Ready to rumble	U. S.	Before the match
June 22-23	3 'Rs' teach England lesson	England	Both
24-Jun	Semi Conscious	Germany	Before the match
25-Jun	Mission Impossible III	Germany & South Korea	Before the match
26-Jun	Kor sprung, Deutsche take it!	Germany	Winner
27-Jun	What a hair-o	Brazil	Winner
28-Jun	The eyes have it	(referee)	before the match
June 29-30	The Final Countdown	Brazil	before the match
July 1	Fifth time on top!	Brazil	Winner

There are 27 pieces of newspapers in all. In each of them, there is a report with huge picture(s) on the first page of World Cup Special every day. Every picture is concerned about either of a pair of national teams which have just finished a match or will face together soon. 7 of them are reports before the match, 2 of them are reports on both the winner and the loser, 4 of them are on the loser, and 14 of them are on the winner. Between the teams which have faced each other, the winner is more likely to be reported. Only 4 of them are exception. The reasons for exception and why the winners are more likely to be reported are discussed in detail in the part of discussion.

From the above, we can see that the mass media's attention would more likely focus on the winner.

#### 1. What are the characters of report selection?

The ended matches, the teams and the individuals are the focus of reporting. Among the ended matches, the winners are preference to be reported. Among the teams, China is one of the focuses to be reported. Among the individuals, the football stars are the focus, such as Beckham of England, Ronaldo of Brazil, Zidane of France.

#### 2. Is it balanced between the reports on the winners and those on the losers?

The winners are the preference to be reported. And among the 24 reports which involve both the winner and the loser, 23 of them are reported from the winner to the loser, and only 1 of them, from the loser to the winner.

#### 3. What are the characters of the language used to report the results of the matches?

In the sentences used to report the results of the matches, active voice is used most of the time. Passive voice is mainly used for France and China.

## 4.2 Discussion

### 4.2.1 Report Selection

Perceptual process is thought of as occurring in three stages: selection, organization, and interpretation. The World Cup is an international competition which contains thirty-two top national teams. Not all the teams can be reported in every day's newspaper. Some of them must be selected and some of them are ignored. To decide what to report is a question of selection. Not all that have happened can be printed. But who decides what to or not to report and how to decide?

Let's see the Westley-Maclean's conceptual model for communication research. The messages C transmits to B (X'') represent his selections from both messages to him from As (X') and C's selections and abstractions from Xs in his own sensory field (X3C, X4), which may or may not be Xs in A's field. In this study, C refers to China Daily. The reporters select some from his sensory field to report. And from Figure 1, we can also

see the reporters perceive only a very small portion of what they could perceive because the limitation of sense organ. This selection stage includes selective attention and selective exposure. Reporters pay attention to some of what have happened and expose those messages "that will confirm their existing beliefs, that will contribute to your objectives, or that will prove satisfying in some way. (Joseph A. Devito, 1998)". Selection is the first stage of perception. So the selection of what to be reported can reflect perception.

The World Cup involves many aspects, such as thirty-two teams, the matches between the teams, football stars, fans, co-hosts, and so on. Among all 323 reports on the World Cup in China Daily, the ended matches, the teams and the individuals are the focus of reporting. The arrangement of 323 reports reflects the selection stage of reporters' perception.

And Crace (1996) states that "there is more news than a paper has room to print, so all stories have to compete for space and it is the editor and senior journalists' job to decide which stories to focus on". It is the editor and senior journalists who make the decision. J. Galtung and M. Ruge use "news staff" to refer to people who work behind the news reports instead of "the editor and senior journalists". They are "reporters" in this paper.

It is reporters who do select. And reporters do select conforming to a set of criteria. J. Galtung and M. Ruge analyzed the foreign news in a set of daily newspapers in 1973. They found that for any event to become a "news item", and therefore considered "newsworthy", it had to pass through a selection process. If it conformed to a particular set of criteria the reporters judged it to be eligible for entry. This is not to say that the reporters were consciously subjecting items to judgment, rather that they used a professional methodology to nose out a good story. This set of criteria Galtung and Urge called "news values". There are both practical and social factors at work in this process. The practical factors include the timing of an event and the amount of space available in the newspaper. The social factors form a framework or pattern from which journalists select items that they consider are most appropriate. The following news values help determine an event's potential newsworthiness (Marsha Jones & Emma Jones, 1999). **Immediacy or frequency**: this is the time span taken for the event to appear. If the event fits in with the frequency of the news media, then it is more likely to be included. **Importance**: this refers to what are seen as elite nations and/or elite people. **Clarity of events**: this refers to the ease of understanding of an event. **Meaningfulness**: this is the cultural relevance and proximity of the event. **Expectedness and unexpectedness**: although these are seemingly contradictory, they are not. An event that is unexpected, such as a disaster of some kind, will be reported; and an event that has gained news value will continue to be reported because we have become familiar with it. **Composition**: sometimes an event is reported that

seems to have little significance and this happens if there is imbalance in the news. In addition, Gating and Urge proposed a further four: reference to elite nations, reference to elite people (usually stars, celebrities and the royal), personalization, and negativity (paradoxically, bad news usually makes good news). If an event has several of these values we are more likely to hear of it. It's true that the news is selected from so many events by reporters conforming to "news values". But the theory of perception tells us that perception exists every stage of effective communication. It is perception with which reporters make judgment whether an event is conforming to "news value" and newsworthy.

The stimulations of the time when the match is on reach the reporters and are selected, organized, and then interpreted by them. You may say the time for match is a fact. That's true. But the fact is selected after the reporters' perceptual process. And the reporters perceive whether the event which is waiting to be reported is of immediacy. And From the data analysis, we can see that if there is a match on the previous day, the reporters select the teams which have played rather than not played. If there is no match on previous day, media selects the teams which will go to play in the following days rather than the teams which played more than one day ago.

One of the criteria to which reporters perceive whether an event is conforming is importance. When reporting an ended match, reporters prefer the winner. On the newspapers of twenty seven days, there are 93 reports on the winner and only 38 on the loser. Among the reports of same sorts the former takes 71%, while the later only 29%. In the reports on the loser, France, China and Argentina are the preference. On the newspaper of June 12, the previous day Denmark won France 2-0, sending France out of the tournament. There are three reports on France and one on both France and Denmark. So the reports on France take two-thirds of the same sorts. Next, let's come to the reports on June 13. There are still two reports on France and three reports on Argentina which lost the previous day and is also out of tournament, while one on the winners Paraguay and Spain each.

In addition, there are nine days' reports only on the winner (no reports on the loser at all). They are June 4, June10, June11, June17, June24, June25, June 26, June28 and July1, which take one-third of China Daily's reports on World Cup. Of course the winners are considered as elite team. Reporters prefer to report on the winners. This will be discussed in detail in the part of language use.

Expectedness and unexpectedness are criteria to which reporters perceive whether an event is conforming. Every team has its own supporters. People give strong expectation on either of them. If they win, it's the result most people expected. So they are likely to be reported, such as England and Brazil. But once they

lose, the result is unexpected. The team is more likely to be reported too, such as France and Argentina.

Reporters try to get balance between compositions on the newspaper. If the elite teams and elite people are reported too much, they will also report something that seems to have little significance which is the other side of World Cup, such as fans and the cost of a match. This kind of balance can help media to construct credibility. But which report is of great significance, and which report is of little significance is judged by reporters with perception. Reporters should also perceive whether it is balanced in the news.

Media has preference on elite nations and elite people. There is a big picture on the first page of World Cup Special every day. 14 of them are about winners. Of course, the winners are elite nations. In the titles, the words of "reigning", "rule" are used to describe the winners. And among the pictures which are about winners, 8 of them describe the player who shots and helps his team win the match. It is common knowledge that football game is the game in which team work is of great importance. But it is also believed that the player who shots is the hero. This can be explained by needs which can influence perception. It may relate to the answer to the question of why football is so charming that so many people in the world pay attention to the World Cup. There may be many reasons of which One is stars. Football stars unify a large number of fans, male and female. Reporters also have ideas about stars. They need perceive who is the most popular star first and then give reports on him. This may explain the frequent appearance of Beckham, Ronaldo, and Zidane in newspaper. Beckham is a famous football star and loved by uncountable fans because of his superb skill, handsome appearance, even his hairstyle. There are 24 pictures and reports on him, from his hairstyle to life-size wax model figure. And Zidane, "the hero of France's 1998 triumph", is also reported much although he didn't attend the first two matches of France because of his thigh muscle. But the reporters pay much attention to his wound and his absence. In addition, there are 14 reports on Ronaldo in all. So the news staff should perceive not only which team is elite, but also which star is popular and what kind of events are those readers care about.

So perception is the basis of making selection and arrangement of reports. Reporters' perception is limited by sense organ. And they judge whether an event is conforming to "news value" by perception.

#### **4.2.2 Language Use**

Language "is not merely a reproducing instrument for voicing ideas but rather is itself the shaper of ideas (Sapir-Whorf)". Melvin L. De Fleur & Sandra Ball Rokeach suggested that the language people use shaped the way they perceive and developed beliefs about the realities around them. Language affects perception in subtle form. On the other hand, accurate perception comes into play at every stage of effective

communication. Perception affects the use of language. So we can see what the reporters' perception is by analyzing the language used in the reports. Since the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis includes in language both its structural and its semantic aspects, the language in the reports will be analyzed from these two aspects. One point must be mentioned that although the two aspects are studied independently, they are held to be inseparable.

### **1) Structural aspect**

#### **a) Subject**

There are 64 matches on the whole. The results of 61 of the matches are reported (see Appendix I) except 2 matches on June 1 which are between Rep. of Ireland and Cameroon and between Uruguay and Denmark, and a match on June 8 which is between South Africa and Slovenia. On the weekend of June 1-2, there are 7 matches. Five of them are selected to be reported on the China Daily of June 3. On the weekend of June 8-9, there are 6 matches, and five of them are reported on the paper of June 10. It may be because of the limited space.

Three kinds of models or language used are concluded to report the results of the matches.

Model 1. (The winner) defeated (the loser).

demolish

win over

stunned

daggered

overwhelmed

beat

a victory over

lead over

Model 2 (the loser) lost to (the winner ).

with a defeat against

were beaten

with a defeat to

Model 3 (either of the teams ) drew with (another team)

a draw with

tie

All the match results which are not draws are reported in the way of model 1 and model 2. In fact, the two models can be used to describe the same result. Let's simplify the two models in the following sentences.

Team A beat Team B.      2.Team B was beaten by Team A.

The two sentences can be used to report the same fact that Team A won and Team B lost. There are two differences between them: voice and the subject / object.

Active voice is used in the first sentence, and passive voice in another sentence. In the first sentence, the winner is the subject, and the loser is the object. It is opposite in the second sentence. The facts are the same, but the perceptions reflected by the sentences are different. Subjects show the perceptual difference of the reporters. The first sentence shows the reporters are on the winners' side while the second, on the losers' side. All the results are reported in the way of model 1 except the results which involve France and China, one of the United States and two of England. In model 1, the words such as "defeat", "demolish", "win over", "stun", "dagger", "overwhelm", "beat", "a victory over", and "lead over" are used after the subject (the winner). All these words make sure the position of the winner. The winners are the preference to be perceived.

How about the exceptions?

The United States crashed to a 3-1 defeat against Poland here yesterday —but scraped into the World Cup second round after South Korea's upset of Portugal.

Generally speaking, the winner of the match would enter the next round. But it didn't work in the match between the United States and Poland. Poland won the game but the United States advanced to the next round. It was special with the United States. So the loser was used as subjects and perceived rather than the winner.

England were beaten 2-1 by Brazil in the quarter-final stage of the World Cup Finals.

The result of the match between England and Brazil is reported. But the sentence appears under a picture in which Japanese football fans cheer the England team as leave their hotel on Awajj Island bound for England. This sentence is used to illustrate that England team is still loved by fans despite of their lost. The subject also shows the focus of reporting. Another one of England is quoted from a newspaper in London. It shows the newspaper in London is on the side of England team.

In the sentences reporting the results of the matches, subject shows the emphasis of report. Model 1 and Model 2 are used to report the results of the matches which are not draws. The same result could be reported in the way of both models. But all this kind of results is reported by the way of model 1 except some exceptions mentioned in the second part of discussion. Model 1 emphasizes the winner while model 2 emphasizes the loser. The ended matches are the focus of reporting. And among the no-draw matches, the winner is the emphasis of reporting. From the amounts of the reports on the winner and the loser, we can also see the reports on the winners are prevailing. Model 2 is used to describe the results involving France and China. Both nations are losers in the first round of the World Cup. But "France" and "China" are the subjects rather than their opponents and get publicized by China Daily. The reasons for this exception will be discussed in detail later. Subjects mentioned have shown that they are also the emphasis of reporting. So both in model 1 or in model 2, subjects decide the prevailing reports which provide the

dominant opinion.

The reporters' perception is affected by a number of external factors so that the perception affects the language use and then the dominant opinion. This can explain why France and China are focus of reporting though they lost the game. Most of the results involving France and China are reported in the way of model 2. That is to say, "France" and "China" are used as subjects.

Previous research has shown that perception is subjective and in general is influenced by assumption (often unconscious), cultural expectations, needs, moods, and attitudes. Werner J. Severin & James W. Tankard, Jr suggested that the same kinds of forces are at work when people respond to mass communication messages. The factors affecting perception will be discussed by examples.

Besides needs mentioned in the last part, perception is influenced by expectation and attitudes. Big surprise also affects perception. Unexpectedness works not only in selection of perception, but also in organization and interpretation. The reports on France are good examples. During the period of the World Cup. France has three matches in which tied one game and lost two, and ended with out of tournaments. Generally speaking, such result among 32 national teams would not be reported particularly. But from the amount and the place of the reports on France, we can see that France is always the focus of reports after each of their match. The reason is that France is the defending champions. The lost makes people unexpected again and again. This is obvious in the sentences used to report the result of the matches which involve France. The fact that France is always the subject shows the reporters are on the side of France.

France: France lost to Senegal.

France crashed to a shocking 1-0 defeat against Senegal.

France were beaten 2-0 by Denmark yesterday.

France lost to Denmark.

Perception is also influenced by attitudes. The effects of attitude on perception were documented in a study of perception on a football game by Hastorf and Cantril (1954). They stated, "It seems clear that the 'game' actually was many different games and that each version of the events that transpired was just as 'real' to a particular person as other versions were to other people". China Daily is a piece of Chinese newspaper. Attitude is reflected between lines more or less. Newspaper spent much place on China team, on the China's coach Bora Milutinovic, and on the fans in pictures, in reports both before and after a match, even they have lost. Chinese national team played three games on June 4, 8, and 13, and didn't come into the second round. But the newspapers covered China team every day from May 31, the first day of the World Cup, to June 17, three days after the end of the first round except June 11. This is clear in the sentences used to

report the result of China. In the following sentences, Chinas are the subjects.

China: Even the return China lost to Costa Rica 2-0 in their first game of the cup yesterday afternoon...

China's 4-0 lose to Brazil sees them out of their first World Cup.

(China) a 3-0 defeat by Turkey . (China) 3-0 loss to Turkey.

China lost 3-0, their third straight lose without scoring a goal.

China concluded its first appearance at the World Cup with a 3-0 defeat against Turkey in Seoul.

China Daily is a newspaper of China. Most of its readers are Chinese who care about the result of China team. Of course China is one of the focuses of reporting. The reporters are on the side of China.

### **b) Exclamatory sentence**

The exclamatory sentences can be used to express strong emotion, and it reflects the reporters' perception easily. Among the titles of the reports with a huge picture on the first page of World Cup Special, the exclamatory sentences are used to report on the winners.

Vive le Senegal! Brazil-iant! What a hair-o ! Fifth time on top!

The examples are the titles of reports on Senegal defeating the defending champions France and the Cup winner Brazil. The result of the match between France and Senegal is reported by the sentences with the subject of France. It seems that people forget the winner, Senegal. So the title of "Vive le Senegal" is used to describe a picture which demonstrates France, the loser in order to get a certain balance. The reporters use the exclamatory sentences to express the huge happiness and make them the focus of reporting.

### **c) Form**

If subject and exclamatory sentence can be called the "micro" aspects of structure of reports, "Inverted Pyramid" form is the "macro" aspect of the reports. It means the most important details are placed at the top and the least important at the bottom of a report. It is one of the organized forms of the language. "Inverted Pyramid" form indicates the emphasized part which is prevailing. It is proposed by Ray Eldon Hiebert and Sheila Jean Gibbon (2000). They suggested that "Information is a set of facts about reality that is not necessarily news while news is the set of facts selected by journalists from all the information available and put into the news format of a given medium. Each medium has its own format for news. The news format of newspaper is the most familiar: a headline, a lead of one or two paragraphs that summarize the main elements of the story ("who, what, where, when, why, and sometimes how"), and the remaining details written not in chronological form as they might be in drama or fiction, but in the inverted pyramid form, meaning the

most important details are placed at the top and the least important at the bottom of a story.”

There are 24 reports which involve both the winner and the loser on the whole. 23 of them are reported from the winner to the loser, and only 1 of them, from the loser to the winner. So the winner is perceived to be more important than the loser. The “Inverted Pyramid” form of reports can also reflect the reporters’ perception on the winner.

## **2) Semantic Aspects**

### **a) Wording**

The spiral of silence theory explains how the mass media works in conjunction with majority opinion to silence minority opinions. Noelle-Neumann (1984) concluded that “that media provides people with the words and phrases ...effectively mute”. She saw only one side of it. The mass media plays an important role just because it provides the dominant opinion and then helps to form the process of the spiral of silence.

Model 3 tells us there are no winner or loser. In this situation, subject can’t clearly show the reporters’ perception. But the wording can reflect something. Model 3 is used to describe the result of the match which ended with a draw. There are no winner and no loser. The words such as “draw”, “tie” are used. But if the word of “draw” or “tie” is modified by the word “scramble”, the meanings of the sentences will be different.

Ireland scrambled a 1-1 draw against once-mighty Germany.

“Scramble” means “struggle with other to get something, or as much or as many as possible of something, from competitors. The competitor is “once mighty Germany”. “Scramble” is used to indicate that it is not easy for Ireland to draw the game with Germany. Although the result is a draw. Reporter perceives Ireland not as strong as Germany.

On the first page of World Cup special on that day, a big picture of celebrating Ireland’s Robbie Keane is entitled “Luck of the Irish”. “Luck” indicates it is no doubt Germany could win the match. But Ireland is so lucky to score. But it is believed that anything can happen during a football match. Irish manager Mick McCarthy valued it “Great result”. On the other hand, German midfielder Carsten Ramelow thought “It was a great shame for us. But we tried everything...I think we played well but that’s the sort of thing that can always happen. It shouldn’t but it did.” Expressions of “Luck”, “great result”, and “shouldn’t” show the idea that although there is a draw between them. Germany is stronger than Ireland. It has been admitted by Irish themselves.

On the other hand, if both teams who will have a match are mighty judged by past World Cup record. The words of “assault” and “clash” will be used. For example, on June 20, before the match there reports

entitled “England braced for Brazilian assault” and “classical clash of between England and Brazil”. Both Brazil and England were the past Cup winners. And both have the world best football player, such as Ronaldo and Beckham. The wording shows the match between once Cup winners and the attack will be violent. The reports tell the fact but the wording can indicate the prevailing opinion. Let’s see more examples.

The opening game is between France and Senegal. It is reported that “Holders France crashed to a shocking 1-0 defeat against African debutants Senegal as the World Cup kicked off with one of the greatest upsets in the tournament’s 72-year history here yesterday.” “It was the first defeat suffered by the defending champions in the opening World Cup match since Cameroon upset Argentina 1-0 in Italy 12 years ago.” “It was also France’s first defeat at the World Cup finals since 1986 when they lost 2-0 in the semis to the former West Germany, although they failed to qualify for the 1990 and 1994 tournaments.” Here words like “shocking”, “greatest”, “72- years”, “first” are used to express unexpectedness on the first page of China Daily on June 1-2. Reuters gave an impressive picture which entitled “They came, they saw, they were conquered”. But people perceive that champions are not so easy to beat. They remained hopeful about the next two games, words such as “two more to play”; “hopeful” are also used. Zidane is mentioned in the reports. For example, “But it was a desperate night for France, who struggled to produce their normal free-flowing game in the absence of injured star playmaker Zinedine Zidane.”

The second match which ended in a goalless draw is between France and Uruguay. A big title “Down but not out” warns people that this shouldn’t happen on defending champions. French goalkeeper Fabien Barthez’s words were quoted, “The guys fought well, we had a lot of chances but we were playing against a team that wasn’t playing football. It’s infuriating to lose a match and then follow it with a game like that one. But there are still great things to come, nothing is over. We’ve got to play to the bitter end. Nothing has gone right for us from the start, but we still have a chance. We’ve just got to know how to grab it and we’re going to give our all just as we did tonight.” From the expressions of “playing against a team that wasn’t playing football”, “great things to come”, “nothing is over”, “have a chance” and “still” twice, we can know the reporters’ last hope for once-mighty France is still alive.

The last game finished. Denmark beat France 2-0, eliminating the defending champions from the competition. There is a picture on the first page of World Cup Special entitled “French kiss goodbye”. No hope any longer. So the words such as “nightmare” appeared in the reports.

In the first three paragraphs of a report, it is reported “France suffered the acute embarrassment of becoming the first defending champions to be knocked out of the

World Cup in the first round for 36 years.” “French finished the tournament with the worst record of any champions in the 72-year history of the tournament.” “France finished bottom of Group A.” At last, “the French became only the third country to go out so early in the defense of a title”. Words such as “first”, “be knocked out”, “in the first round”, “for 36 years”, “worst”, and “72-year history” are used.

All the reports on French team after those three games reflect this: unexpectedness. The fact that an elephant kills a mosquito may not be news. But that a mosquito kills an elephant is definitely big news. People’s perception is influenced by unexpectedness which can be shown by wording..

Co-hosts South Korea swept into the quarter finals with a 2-1 golden-goal win over Italy. But the refereeing is questioned by Italian. June 20’s China Daily quotes the words on Italy’s newspapers. Italy’s newspapers struggled to find the words to express the nation’s anger at Ecuadorian referee Byron Moreno.

Nothing short of religious language will do for La Repubblica (a piece of newspaper in Italy) which sets the scene for a 13-page lament by recounting “the way of the cross of our national team” as it stumbled its way through the finals, ambushed at every turn, by bad refereeing. Moreno is “the card –wielding executioner”, while there is little criticism of the team who lost 2-1 to South Korea on Tuesday, with an extra –time “golden goal”. Italy’s newspaper dubbed the four yearly festival of football hosted by Japan and South Korea “the dirty World Cup”. Negative words are used to show the indefinite and injustice. “Never in the history of the World Cup have so many injustices been committed against one team”. “There aren’t referees, but the thieves of dreams”. “We should be refereed by the best, not by a guy who is 20 kilos overweight.” Moreno has been branded “public enemy number one” in Italy. They also use negative words to attack Moreno such as “doubly odious”. “An indecent and scandalous referee” “robber”. And the portly Moreno gets a bashing for his weight: “a fat little toy with bulging eyes”, “the only referee with cellulite on his face”. It is the wording by Italy’s newspapers shows the dominant opinion prevailing in Italy: the referee was bad and injustice.

Because of the furious criticism leveled at Moreno. FIFA couldn’t be silent, or the opinion would be spread and the spiral of silence would be formed. China Daily published the words of spokesman Keith Cooper. The title is “Men in black showing a high standard: FIFA”.

“Inaccuracies have been kept to a minimum. There is a general feeling of satisfaction”. He thought there had been no problems with the refereeing. However he did admit there problems with the linesmen. “A major problem in football at the professional level we are playing are not the referees but the assistant referees”. The words of “high standard”, “minimum”, “satisfaction”, “major” affirm the refereeing between Italy and South Korea. Obviously, the explanation from

Cooper couldn’t calm the rage of Italian. Next day, “FIFA president Sepp Blatter has strongly condemned refereeing at the World Cup, saying Italy had been the main victims on the way to their shock quarter-final elimination. The words “condemn” and “victims” admit the injustice on Italy. To maintain the authority of refereeing, he also said “The referees have been quite good, but the linesmen have been a disaster, especially when it comes to offside.” The word “disaster” means FIFA attributes the injustice to the linesmen. Italy complained bitterly. On June 22-23’s China Daily, “The Italian-south Korea referee was wrong to send off Italian captain Francesco Totti for diving, FIFA admitted yesterday.” “But Codesal, who refereed the 1990 World Cup final said television had proved Moreno was wrong.” The words of “wrong”, “admitted” and “proved” show the definite injustice has taken place. He also gave some explanation of injustice. “It was a very difficult situation for the referee. At the speed of the game today, mistakes can happen. It is impossible to see everything. Referees are honest men and try to do their best. The idea is to try to be fair. This is very important, but mistakes always happen. The referee’s mistake is part of the game, like the player’s mistake, like the coach’s mistake. We need to be more human with the referee.” He said that out of the 5,000 odd decisions taken by referees and linesmen in the tournament to date, only four or five serious mistakes had been made. “About one per thousand. It is low.”

The expressions of “very difficult”, “can”, “impossible”, “always”, “part”, and “human” means mistakes are unavoidable. The words of “honest”, “try”, “fair”, “do their best” state the quality of the referee. And the words of “only”, “one per thousand” and “low” indicate that the referee couldn’t be responsible for Italy’s exit. After that, Spanish players also complained refereeing between South Korea and Spain. The title of the report is “FIFA says referees are only human”. In the report, it is mentioned that “controversial decisions were also made in Korea’s earlier victories over Portugal and Italy”. FIFA gave explanation for all complaints that “There have been one or two mistakes which are a cause of concern but overall the referees have been very well prepared for this World Cup...and every match is reviewed. But referees are only human and mistakes can be made”. The word “human” is used for several times. Human can make mistakes and be forgivable. On this controversial question of refereeing, the reports show a process of compromise of complaints and explanations. The attitudes of FIFA change from “satisfaction” to “human”. No complaints appear in newspapers any more. So “referees are only human” becomes the dominant opinion.

#### **b) Applying**

Besides “Inverted Pyramid” form, some sentences are also impressive to be dominant, especially in the titles. The sentences apply the pattern people are familiar with.

applying the words of songs

Cry for me, Argentina      French kiss goodbye  
Dream goes Ahn and on

All these titles apply the words of the songs which people are familiar with. The first two are used to report the exit of Argentina and France. The words of "cry" and "kiss goodbye" create an atmosphere of gloomy. The title of "Cry for me, Argentina" comes from the words of a song "Don't cry for me, Argentina". So the emotional coloring of the first two titles are sorrow. And the last one is used to report the victory of South Korea. It applies the theme song "my heart will go on" in the film of "Titanic". This sentence is filled with enthusiasm. Applying makes the language lively. And the examples show the sympathy and happiness of the reporters.

applying the idiom

No pain, fine gained. It is used to report former World Cup player of the year, Brazilian midfielder Rivaldo who was punished for his theatrics in Brazil's opening World Cup match against Turkey. This sentence applies the idiom that "No pains, no gains." It makes the language more impressive. and shows the criticism of the reporters on Rivaldo.

For the World Cup, most readers didn't go to South Korea or Japan to see the games. Their information comes from the reports in China Daily. What's in the newspaper will be the dominant opinion easily. In the process of the spiral of silence, the media publicize public opinion, making evident which opinions predominate. Individuals express their opinions or not, depending on the predominant points of view, and the media, in turn, attend to the expressed opinion, and the spiral continues. It makes the newspaper more important in such an international event.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

From the news reports on the World Cup, we conclude the content of dominant opinions provided by China Daily: 1, likely report the winner; 2, likely report the loser, such as France and China only affected by expectation and attitudes; 3, likely report the best football stars; 4, referees are only human. The first three

are based on the range of the types of reports, and the last one is concluded because of its intensity.

The World Cup is an international competition. That who won and who lost is reality. But the reality processed by reporters' perception has been different from the reality itself. The major conclusions of the work presented in this thesis fall into four parts by the research questions.

Firstly, perception is the basis of making selection of what to be reported. It is reporters who do selection whose perception is limited by their sense organs. And the selection is also made conforming to "news value". Reporters judge whether an event is newsworthy by perception.

Secondly, reporters' perception can be influenced by expectation, attitudes and needs. And reporters' perception can affect the dominant opinion. This paper analyzed the language used by reporters and concluded these three factors influencing reporters' perception.

Thirdly, the language of reports affects the process of the spiral of silence by helping to form the dominant opinion. Previous studies have shown the mass media provides the dominant opinion. This paper summarized the language helps to form the dominant opinion and then affects the spiral of silence from the aspects of structure and semantics. Structural aspects include subject of the sentences, exclamatory sentences, and the organized form of language. Semantic aspects include wording and applying the pattern people are familiar with.

Finally, it is concluded that reporters' perception affects the spiral of silence by report selection and language use. The selection of news reports reflects the reporters' perceptual process. And it is reporters' perception that decides what has the possibility to be dominant opinions which help to form the spiral of silence. Perception can affect the spiral of silence on this level. The language used in the newspaper reflects the reporters' perception. The ways to report the same fact can be very different by different perception. By analyzing the structural and semantic aspects of language, we know that the language use shows what is prevailing and then provides the dominant opinion in these ways, that the language use is affected by the reporters' perception.

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